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GENERAL

1. French Foreign Ministry official wants early end to Berlin conference:

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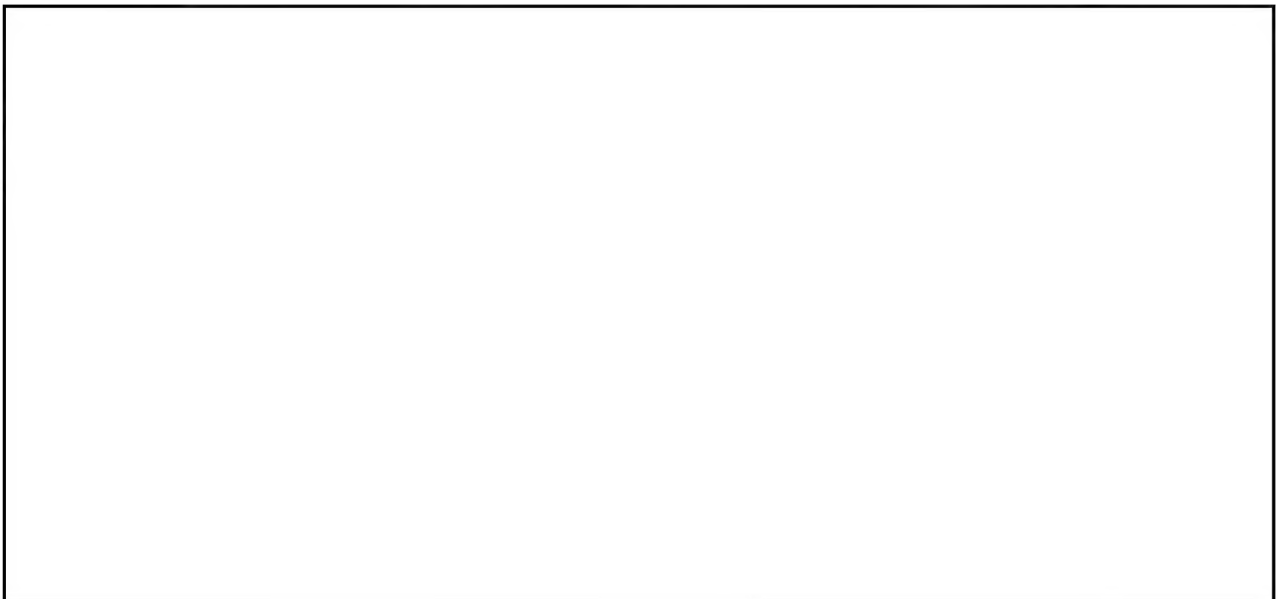
A French Foreign Ministry spokesman told the American embassy in Paris on 5 February that the principal question remaining at the Berlin conference was how best to terminate

it. He expects the USSR to press for the establishment of expert working groups on "Germany, the Far East, disarmament, et cetera" which would report to a future four-power ministerial meeting.

He recommends that the West suggest that diplomatic channels be used for the discussion of the first two topics and that disarmament be handled in the United Nations. If progress is made by such means, then the Foreign Ministers could meet again.

Comment: The disillusionment of the Paris press with the Soviet position at Berlin may encourage the Foreign Ministry to seek an early end to the conference. It is unlikely, however, that the French government will press for its termination until satisfied that the secret discussions at Berlin offer no hope for an acceptable solution in Indochina.

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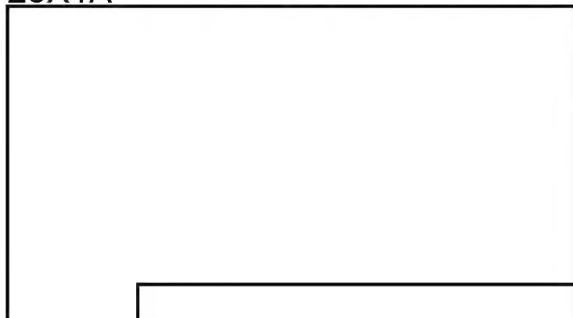
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NEAR EAST - AFRICA

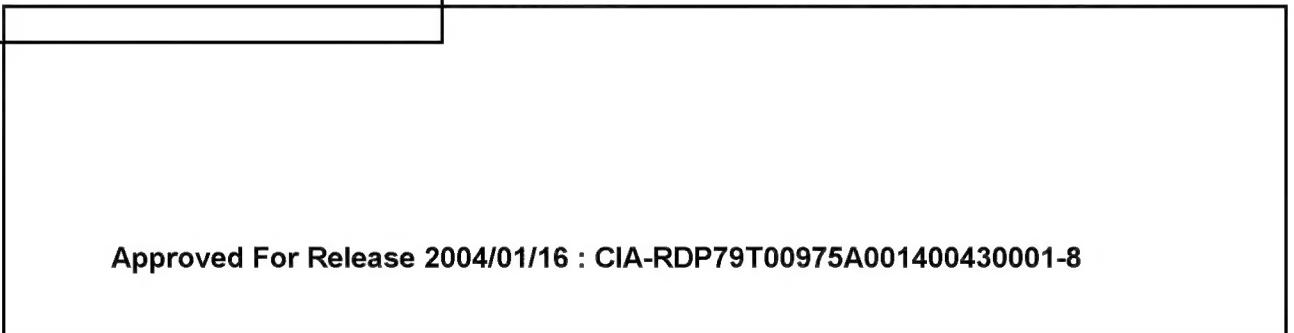
4. Foreign powers allegedly implicated in Syrian crisis:

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The king of Saudi Arabia told Ambassador Wadsworth on 3 February that reports from his ambassador and other sources in Syria indicated that British and Iraqi intrigue to achieve an Iraqi-Syrian union was responsible for the current Syrian crisis.

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Comment: President Shishakli has publicly charged that his domestic problems are the result of foreign activity and President Nagib of Egypt has supported his accusations. Charges of British and possible Iraqi involvement are implicit in both statements.

Despite these allegations, there is no reliable evidence that either the British or Iraqi government is directly involved. Various Iraqi officials have, however, in the past actively promoted Iraqi-Syrian union and may well be implicated in current maneuvers.

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WESTERN EUROPE

6. Question of German freedom to reject EDC threatens ratification prospects:

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The Western statement at Berlin that a united Germany will be completely free to reject EDC membership is "a serious blow"

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to prospects for French ratification, according to the French NATO representative.

American officials in Paris have learned that Brussels also fears the effect of the Western statement on Belgian ratification chances, and that the government has asked for a pro-EDC statement from the big-three ministers to counteract its effect. The Belgian NATO representative said his government was being pressed very hard on the grounds that the EDC fails in its primary purpose because it now appears that Germany will be the only signatory not bound by the treaty.

The Dutch representative points out that the treaty is ambiguous on the question, and expressed concern over the effect of the statement on all the signatories.

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